

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

KENNETH C. WENZEL,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No. 13-11897
Hon. Denise Page Hood

COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY,

Defendant.

ORDER ACCEPTING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
and
ORDER REMANDING ACTION

This matter is before the Court on Magistrate Judge Charles E. Binder's Report and Recommendation [Doc. No. 12, filed April 3, 2014]. To date, no objections have been filed to the Report and Recommendation, and the time to file such has passed.

Judicial review of the Commissioner's decision is limited in scope to determining whether the Commissioner employed the proper legal criteria in reaching his conclusion. *Garner v. Heckler*, 745 F.2d 383 (6th Cir. 1984). The credibility findings of an administrative law judge ("ALJ") must not be discarded lightly and should be accorded great deference. *Hardaway v. Secretary of Health and Human Services*, 823 F.2d 922, 928 (6th Cir. 1987). A district court's review of an ALJ's decision is not a *de novo* review. The district court may not resolve

conflicts in the evidence nor decide questions of credibility. *Garner*, 745 F.2d at 397. The decision of the Commissioner must be upheld if supported by substantial evidence, even if the record might support a contrary decision or if the district court arrives at a different conclusion. *Smith v. Secretary of HHS*, 893 F.2d 106, 108 (6th Cir. 1984); *Mullen v. Bowen*, 800 F.2d 535, 545 (6th Cir. 1986).

The Court has had an opportunity to review this matter and finds that the Magistrate Judge reached the correct conclusion for the proper reasons. This Court agrees with the Magistrate Judge that the ALJ's findings were not supported by substantial evidence. The Court further agrees with the Magistrate Judge that there are unresolved legal and factual issues to be determined by the ALJ and that this matter be remanded under sentence four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

The Supreme Court recognizes only two kinds of remands involving social security cases—those pursuant to sentence four and those pursuant to sentence six of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). *Melkonyan v. Sullivan*, 501 U.S. 89, 99 (1991); *Sullivan v. Finkelstein*, 496 U.S. 617, 626 (1990). The Supreme Court concluded that Congress's explicit delineation in § 405(g) regarding circumstances under which remands are authorized clearly showed that Congress intended to limit the district court's authority to enter remand orders in these two types of cases. *Melkonyan*, 501 U.S. at 100. Sentence four allows a district court to remand in conjunction with a judgment affirming, modifying or reversing the Commissioner's decision.

Id. at 99-100. Sentence four remands are appropriate in situations where the decision maker incorrectly applied the regulations in denying disability benefits. *Faucher v. Secretary of Health & Human Servs.*, 17 F. 3d 171, 174 (6th Cir. 1994). In such situations the district court must reverse the Commissioner's decision and remand the matter for further proceedings in order to correct the error. *Id.* A judgment must be entered immediately with a sentence four remand and the district court does not retain jurisdiction during the administrative proceedings on remand. *Melkonyan*, 501 U.S. 101-02. Failure to remand under sentence four and retention of jurisdiction is error. *Shalala v. Schaeffer*, 509 U.S. 292, 299 (1993). A sentence four remand is a judgment for the plaintiff. *Id.* at 302 (citations omitted).

Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED that the Report and Recommendation of Magistrate Judge Charles E. Binder [**Doc. No. 12, filed April 3, 2014**] is **ACCEPTED** and **ADOPTED** as this Court's findings of fact and conclusions of law.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Plaintiff's Motion to Remand [**Doc. No. 9, filed August 6, 2013**] is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment [**Doc. No. 11, filed October 31, 2013**] is **DENIED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Commissioner's findings are **REVERSED** and this matter is **REMANDED** to the Commissioner under Sentence Four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) for further proceedings.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this action is designated as **CLOSED** on the Court's docket.

S/Denise Page Hood
Denise Page Hood
United States District Judge

Dated: August 12, 2014

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing document was served upon counsel of record on August 12, 2014, by electronic and/or ordinary mail.

S/LaShawn R. Saulsberry
Case Manager